

### Claims

1. A chat manager system (304) for administrating an event-related chat room, the chat manager comprising
  - a chat room creation device (307) which communicates with a chat server (314) to perform at least one function selected from the group consisting of creating, cancelling and joining a chat room, and
  - a trigger device (306) which is programmed to activate itself at the occurrence of an event and automatically sends a request for creation of a chat room to the chat room creation device.
2. A chat manager system according to claim 1, further comprising a scheduler device (306) to maintain a playlist of events, each event being associated to at least one event information item selected from the group consisting of :
  - identification of event provider,
  - name of event,
  - begin time,
  - end time,
  - name of chat room,
  - topic of chat room,the scheduler device being interfaced to the trigger device to program the trigger device according to event information of the playlist.
3. A chat manager system according to claim 2, in which the request for creation includes event information.
4. A chat manager system according to anyone of claims 1 to 3, the chat manager system further comprising a notification system (308) adapted to generate a notification signal intended to notify a potential user of the created chat room.
5. A chat manager system according to anyone of claims 1 to 4, further comprising a discussion transmission device (307, 315) which receives chat room data from the chat

server corresponding to exchanges between users connected to the created chat room, and forwards the chat room data to potential users of the created chat room.

- 5 6. A digital television operator head end system (301) for broadcasting services to subscriber decoders (309), comprising a chat manager system according to anyone of claims 1 to 5.

- 10 7. A digital television operator head end system according to claim 6, further comprising
- a broadcast device (310, 311, 313) used for preparing a transmission of information to the subscriber decoders,
  - a notification server (308) interfaced with the chat manager to generate a notification message to be transmitted by the broadcast device,
  - a service plan device (316) interfaced with the chat manager to provide a service number corresponding to the event, the service number being used by the notification server to generate a notification message for the concerned service only.

- 15 8. A digital television operator head end system according to claim 6 or 7, further comprising a programming server (302) interfaced with the chat manager to allow a distant access (303) for programming.

- 20 9. A chat system for a digital television network comprising a digital television operator head end system according to anyone of claims 6 to 8, and at least a decoder (309) for receiving and decoding services broadcast by the digital television operator, the decoder at least comprising a chat client (319).

- 25 10. A chat system for a digital television network comprising a digital operator head end system (301) for broadcasting to subscriber decoders (309), the digital operator head end system comprising
- a chat room creation device (307) which communicates with a chat server (314) to create, cancel and/or join an event related chat room,

- a trigger device (306) which may be programmed to activate itself at the occurrence of an event and automatically sends a request for creation of a chat room to the chat room creation device,
- a broadcast device (310, 311, 313) used for preparing a transmission of information to the subscriber decoders,
- a notification server (308) to generate a notification message to be transmitted by the broadcast device, the notification message being related to the creation of an event related chat room.

11. A chat system according to claim 10, further comprising  
a scheduler device (306) to maintain a playlist of events, each event being associated to at least one event information item selected from the group of :

- identification of event provider,
- name of event,
- begin time,
- end time,
- name of chat room,
- topic of chat room,

the scheduler device being interfaced to the trigger device to program the trigger device according to event information of the playlist.

12. A chat system according to claim 11, in which at least an event is related to a television programme, the chat system further comprising  
a service plan device (316) to provide a service number corresponding to a service on which the television programme is broadcast to the subscribers, the service number being used by the notification server to generate a notification message for the concerned service only.

13. A method for administrating event related chat rooms in a digital television network comprising

- maintaining a playlist of events and related information,
- automatically requesting a chat server to create an event related chat room on occurrence of an event of the playlist.

14. A method according to claim 13 further comprising
- receiving information to be broadcast from a content provider,
  - detecting in the information to be broadcast a determined information corresponding to an event of the playlist,
  - 5   ▪ automatically requesting a chat server to create an event related chat room on detecting the determined information.
15. A method according to anyone of claim 13 or 14 further comprising notifying potential users of a newly created event related chat room about its creation.
16. A method according to claim 15 further comprising
- 10   ▪ relating an event with a television programme,
  - identifying a service number used to broadcast the television programme in the television network,
  - using the service number to notify potential users.
17. A chat manager system (304) for providing passive access to a chat room for subscribers (309) in a digital television network, the chat manager comprising,
- 15   ▪ an interface to a chat server for receiving chat room data related to a chat room currently opened on the chat server,
  - broadcasting means (310, 311, 313) for formatting and broadcasting the chat room data to the subscribers.
- 20   18. A chat manager system according to claim 17, further comprising a buffer (315) to store chat room data for delayed broadcast by the broadcasting means.
19. A method for providing passive access to at least one of a plurality of chat rooms for subscribers in a digital television network, comprising
- 25   ▪ gathering chat room data related to the chat room from a chat server on which the chat room is opened,
  - broadcasting the gathered chat room data to the subscribers.

20. A decoder for receiving and processing services broadcast by a digital television operator head end system according to anyone of claims 6 to 8 comprising:

- display means to display discussion data from a chat room on a television screen, the discussion data appearing at the same time as a determined service currently being broadcast and displayed.

21. A decoder according to claim 20, further comprising

- a pop-up display means that generates a pop-up window on the television screen, containing a notification about the creation of an event related chat room.

22. A decoder according to claim 21, further comprising

- connection means to establish a return link between the decoder and the chat server, the return link being used to send discussion data from the decoder to the chat server.

23. A decoder according to claim 22, the return link being used as a bi-directional link that allows to receive discussion data from the chat server.

24. A decoder according to anyone of claims 21 to 23, further comprising

- MPEG filtering means for filtering the determined service among the services being broadcast according to filtering parameters, the filtering means being connected to the pop-up display means, and the filtering parameters being used to activate the pop-up display means if the creation of the event related chat room is related to the determined service.

25. A decoder for receiving and processing chat room data broadcast by a chat manager system according to claim 17, comprising

- display means to display the chat room data on a television screen at the same time as a determined television programme.

26. A decoder according to claim 25, further comprising

- a pop-up display means that generates a pop-up window on the television screen containing a notification about a creation of a chat room related to the determined television programme.
27. A decoder according to claim 26, further comprising
- 5       ▪ connection means to establish a return link between the decoder and the chat server, the return link being used to send chat room data from the decoder to the chat server, thereby enabling an active access to the chat room.
28. A decoder according to claim 27, the return link being used as a bi-directional link that allows to receive chat room data from the chat server.
- 10   29. A decoder according to anyone of claims 26 to 28, further comprising
- MPEG filtering means for filtering the determined television programme according to filtering parameters, the filtering means being connected to the pop-up display means, and the filtering parameters being used to activate the pop-up display means if the creation of the chat room related to the determined television
- 15       programme is related to the television programme currently being filtered.
30. A decoder for receiving and processing chat room data in a digital television network, comprising
- a notification component (317) that receives and processes a notification signal generated by a chat manager system according to claim 4,
- 20       ▪ pop-up display means that display a pop-up window containing the notification signal on a television screen.
31. A decoder according to claim 30, further comprising
- MPEG filtering means that use filtering parameters to filter a television programme, the MPEG filtering means being connected to the pop-up display means, the pop-up display means being activated if the filtering parameters of
- 25       a currently filtered television programme relate to the event causing the newly creation of the chat room.